8127.0 - Characteristics of Small Business, Australia, 2003

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 28/04/2004

MEDIA RELEASE

April 28, 2004 Embargoed 11:30am (AEST) 60/2004

Growth of small business sector slows: ABS

Small business experienced the slowest rate of growth on record in the two years leading to 2003, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The number of small businesses has grown by 1.5% since 2001, the slowest rate of growth recorded for small businesses since this series began in 1995. At June 2003 there were an estimated 1,179,300 small businesses in Australia.

Of the June 2003 small business population:
- over half (56%) did not employ anyone (up 5% since June 2001)
- one-third (33%) employed one to four people (down 2%)
- 11% employed five to 19 people (down 2%).

The number of small business operators has declined by 0.4% over the preceding two years with 1,591,500 small business operators as at June 2003. Two-thirds of these small business operators were male, consistent with previous survey findings.
Victoria recorded the highest growth rate (6%) of small business operators. Female operators (up 13%) were a significant contributor to this increase.

South Australia recorded the largest decrease in the number of small business operators, down by 13%. This included a 25% drop in female operators.

Home-based businesses comprised two-thirds (67% or 784,800 small businesses) of the total small business population in Australia. These home based businesses involved close to a million operators (987,700), representing 62% of all small business operators.

More details are available in **Characteristics of Small Businesses, Australia** (cat. no. 8127.0).

This page last updated 8 December 2006

© Commonwealth of Australia

All data and other material produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) constitutes Commonwealth copyright administered by the ABS. The ABS reserves the right to set out the terms and conditions for the use of such material. Unless otherwise noted, all material on this website – except the ABS logo, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and any material protected by a trade mark – is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Australia licence